



# DISCOVER THE DELTA FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 609  
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## **Mission Statement**

The Discover the Delta Foundation's mission is to increase awareness of the agricultural, cultural, historical, environmental, and recreational value of the California Delta so that this very important resource can be better understood, protected, enhanced, and enjoyed.

## **History and Overview**

California's Delta shares the distinction with the Nile River of Egypt as being one of the most easily recognized triangular (delta) shaped landmasses in the world, if viewed from the vantage point of a satellite orbiting the earth. With two-thirds of all Californians getting their water from its sources, it could be argued that the Delta is also the most important region in the state. On land, however, the Delta becomes less obvious and more difficult to explore with rivers and highways dividing the region into a multitude of districts and counties.

The Discover the Delta Foundation is being established by a group of individuals that live, work, and play in the Delta. They all share a common belief that, now more than ever, the Delta needs an identity and it needs a "voice" with better communication and educational efforts. Road signage that would recognize and identify the Delta at all major entry points into the region and the construction of a "Discover the Delta" information center are the primary goals of foundation for this year. Meeting these initial objectives would provide the avenue to achieve the overall mission of increasing awareness of the Delta's resources:

### ***Farming and Agriculture***

Agriculture is a key part of the Delta region with an estimated 90 percent of land in the region still devoted to growing crops. From peat-grown sod to wine grapes and pears, it is the foundation's goal to educate the public on the wide array of crops that are grown in this incredibly fertile region of the state.

### ***Culture and History***

The California Delta has a fascinating history that is worthy of an entire educational center in its own right. The foundation's goal is to have several displays at the center that would tell the story of a flood-prone swampland first visited by the Native American Indians, later settled by gold-miner-turned-farmers, and further developed by Chinese railroad laborers to eventually become a center of steamboat-powered river commerce.

Equally fascinating is the geological and natural history of the area and the changes that have occurred in the region over millions of years. Educational displays will be devoted to these topics as well.

### ***Environment and Habitat***

While providing water to over twenty million people and irrigation to over four million acres of farmland, this vast watershed is also invaluable habitat to hundreds of species of fish and wildlife. It is also a prime destination for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds as well as the state's primary passageway for spawning Chinook salmon and steelhead. Protection of this habitat requires public awareness and education, and the foundation's information center will be a primary conduit for making this information available to the public. Several displays and literature racks will be available solely for this purpose.

### ***Recreation***

The Delta has long been a destination for boaters, fishermen, wind-surfers, wine-tasters, and back-road adventurers looking for a quiet getaway. It is part of the foundation's mission to make sure that the Delta remains a place that these and other recreational activities can be enjoyed. The information center will provide literature racks and map cases for identifying the array of recreational activities that are available in the area.

## **Discover the Delta Foundation Advisory Team**

The Discover the Delta Foundation advisory team was assembled from a group of Delta residents who believe that the Delta's present and future identity should be defined by those who live, work, and play in the Delta. Ultimately, these individuals will be charged with assembling a Board of Directors that represents all facets of the foundation's mission. At present, the advisory team has representatives from the Delta Protection Commission, the California Delta Chambers and Visitors Bureau, the California Delta Habitat and Education Foundation, and additional independent local business, agriculture, recreation, and ecotourism interests.

## **Objective #1: Road Signage**

The Foundation has been working with the three Caltrans districts located in the Delta region to get "Welcome to the California Delta" signs placed at all major entry points. The proposed sign was designed by local artist, Marty Stanley, and as many as sixteen locations have been identified in the five-county area. It is the foundation's plan to have the signage implemented in conjunction with the information center since this "branding" will be instrumental in developing the Delta's identity.

## **Objective #2: Information Center**

The proposed "Discover the Delta" Information center is to be a 2400 sq. ft. barn-style building located at the intersection of Highways 12 and 160 across from Rio Vista. This location has been identified as the busiest intersection in the Delta with nearly 10 million vehicles passing through annually. The property is owned by Bruce Towne, a long-time Delta farmer with whom the foundation is setting up a long-term land lease. The building itself will have an attractive historic look and will be spacious enough to house the displays on farming and agriculture, cultural and natural history, habitat and conservation, boating and recreation, fish and game information, levee development and flood control, wine region information, and any other topics that support the foundation's mission.

The center will be located next to a fruit market that is to be constructed at the same time and will share a parking area, restroom facilities, and a common grape arbor/picnic area. The grounds will also have room for antique farm equipment and other large items for public display.

## **Funding and Contributions**

The Discover the Delta Foundation will be relying on funding from three primary sources:

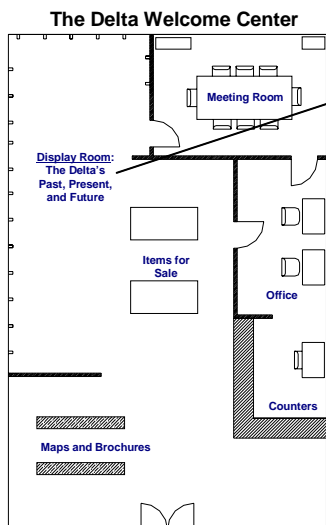
**Local businesses-** The construction of the information center will rely in large part on contributions and donated materials from local businesses and building suppliers. The foundation's goal is to make the construction of the center a community-shared project, and a campaign to promote this effort is currently underway.

**County and State Agency Funding-** The Delta spreads out over five counties (Sacramento, Yolo, Solano, Contra Costa, and San Joaquin) and each of these counties has a vested interest in increasing awareness of the combined resources that this area has to offer. The foundation is approaching district supervisors from each of the Delta counties and asking for the full support and funding of this project. With Sacramento County already committing support and the other four counties voicing considerable interest, the foundation is expecting positive results. Requests for funding from other public agencies with interests in the Delta will follow. The financial support received from these avenues will be crucial to the success of the foundation, especially in the first years of operation.

**Membership Dues and Contributions-** The foundation will also count on support from membership-based dues and contributions, and a campaign is underway to spread the foundation's message to the general public. Tax deductible "giving" levels will be established whereby members can expect newsletters, calendars, discounts on field events, recognition in the annual report, and other benefits depending on their membership level. This type of membership program is similar to that of the Mono Lakes Committee which currently has over 17,000 members. The goal is to achieve membership numbers at least as high which, in the long term, will become the single most important source of funding for the foundation. **For more information on how you can get involved, please contact Trisha Molnar at (209) 712-6908, or Karl Benjamin at (916) 777-6462.**

## DISCOVER THE DELTA INFORMATION CENTER CONCEPT AND LOCATION

### Info Center Design



#### Displays to Include:

- Boating and Recreation
- Fish and Game Information
- Habitat and Conservation
- Delta Cultural History
- Farming and Agriculture
- Geologic History
- Levee Development and Flood Control
- Wine Region and Vineyards
- Other

### Info Center Location

